

Abraham Lincoln papers

From Benjamin F. Hall to Edward Bates¹, May 20, 1863

1 Hall, a political ally of William H. Seward, was appointed the Chief Justice of the Colorado Territory in 1861.

Denver, Colorado Territory

May 20. 1863

Sir:

I have the honor to inform you that the People of this territory appear to be following their vocations in peace; and that the known efforts of the Executive and his Military here to keep up the idea at Washington that there is still a state of war here, are unwarranted by any facts within my knowledge. During the first year of our Territorial existence we were menaced with both rebels and Indians; but those dangers were long ago passed. So far as I am able to discern now, there is nothing of that sort requiring the presence of more than one mounted company of men here, and that is only necessary for a show of strength at Forts Lyon & Garland. They pretend to keep a Provost Guard in Denver and to make arrests of rebels; but those harsh proceedings are uncalled for now. Like all frontier territories this one is somewhat troubled with horse thieves and robbers; but that difficulty is not relieved at all by the presence of the troops.

As the current expences of troops here are fearfully great, and as they are supplied at exorbitant prices, it appears to me that the government cannot afford much longer to tolerate these matters.

I do not conceive it to be my duty to prefer charges against anybody; but I cannot afford to be presumed to acquiesce in either the necessity or propriety of the present burden on the Treasury for Military forces here where they are not needed, especially when the government needs every man in the field elsewhere.

I therefore desire you to say to the President, as from me, that it is my judgment that he should discontinue recruiting here, and order all the troops in Colorado except one company to active service in the States.

By so doing he will relieve the Treasury, stop various extravagant if not fraudulent expenditures & cause these troops to do some necessary service.



I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

Benj. F. Hall

Ch. Justice of Colorado.